



March 27, 2017

The Honorable Cristina Garcia, Chair
Assembly Natural Resources Committee
California State Assembly
State Capitol Building
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Assembly Bill 1530 (Gonzalez Fletcher) -- SUPPORT

Dear Assembly Member Garcia,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we are pleased to offer our strong support for Assembly Bill 1530, which provides critical amendments to the Urban Forestry Act of 1978 (UFA) that align with the Administration and Legislature's priorities in connecting trees to climate change and environmental justice.

AB 1530 augments and expands several aspects of the Act in direct response to California's climate goals and evolving state priorities, which include:

- Improved maintenance of our existing urban forests;
- Development of local and regional canopy targets;
- Supporting the use of local water sources to care for trees;
- Optimizing opportunities to utilize urban forests for carbon sequestration and energy conservation;
- Expanding workforce development;
- Assuring that disadvantaged communities (DACs) throughout California have adequate resources and technical assistance to support the health and maintenance of urban forests that they depend on for critical health and environmental benefits.

Our urban forests are under tremendous pressure from drought and disease. More frequent extreme-heat days and increasingly stronger winter storms are requiring our communities to become more reliant on the vital shading and flood management benefits our urban trees provide. To ensure our urban forests are capable of providing maximum benefits to communities, we must invest in holistic management solutions to create urban forests that are resilient and able to extend benefits to all in the face of climate change and other future challenges.

The UFA amendments proposed in AB 1530 would enable and incentivize the development of integrated, multi-benefit urban forestry strategies that promote projects which provide numerous human and ecological benefits. This includes: greening and beautifying our communities; increasing carbon sequestration potential; improving air quality and urban cooling; reducing energy consumption; promoting climate adaptation for DACs; increasing water conservation and efficiency; and improving management of stormwater and dry weather runoff. With all the challenges facing our state and our communities - especially within the most vulnerable and under-resourced neighborhoods - it is more important than ever that we identify a path for realizing these benefits on the ground.

By directing the Department of Forestry and Fire Prevention (CAL FIRE) to set local and regional tree canopy targets, with an emphasis on DACs most vulnerable to urban heat island effects, AB 1530 is addressing a critical need throughout our state to protect our residents who are most vulnerable to climate change and associated health impacts. In order to maximize urban forest health and resilience, it is wise that plans for canopy expansion account for changes in water resources at the local level, as well as species diversity and adaptability.

The time to focus our efforts on improving the health of our urban forests throughout our state is now. If passed, AB 1530 would allow communities around the state to respond with greater urgency to threats facing our urban forests, and more effectively plan for the urban forests we will need in the future. We are in strong support of the measure, and urge your AYE vote when the bill is heard before the Natural Resources Committee.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Turner
American Forests

Bonnie Holmes-Gen
American Lung Association in California

Claire Robinson
Amigos de los Rios

Shain B. Haug
Allied Gardens/Grantville Community Council

Kristan Brown
Association of Professional Landscape Designers

Juan Altamirano
Audubon California

Finian Makepeace
Kiss the Ground

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Steven Goetz
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Bruce Reznik
Los Angeles Waterkeeper

Jeanie Ward-Waller
California Bicycle Coalition

Alan Lessik
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Jeanne Merrill
California Climate and Agriculture Network

Michael Vukman
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Jena Price
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Catherine Martineau
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John Bolthouse
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Gilbert Martinez
Fathers and Families of San Joaquin

Melanie Schlotterbeck
Friends of Harbors, Beaches, and Parks

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Defenders of Wildlife

Doug Wildman
Friends of the Urban Forest

Connie Gannon
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Lisa Hershey
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Nancy Sappington
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Sharyn Romano
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Tamika Butler
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Nathan Higgins
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Manuel Alonso-Martinez
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Claire Scholtterbeck
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North East Trees

Ron Sundergill
National Parks Conservation Association

Gavin Raders
Planting Justice

Vladimir Goren
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Parent Pioneers

Jan Mignone
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Jackie Heyneman
Save our Forest/Fallbrook Land Conservancy

Richard Dale
Sonoma Ecology Center

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California Walks

Cc: The Honorable Lorena Gonzalez Fletcher, California State Assembly